

## CHAPTER 2

### HISTORY

(The following brief history of Farmington is excerpted from an article appearing in the Davis County Clipper newspaper, August 21, 1991.)

A hundred years in the making and with a cast numbering in the thousands, Farmington is a city proud of its past and cautiously optimistic about its future.

Nestled snugly within the looming shadow of the majestic Wasatch Range about 16 miles north of Salt Lake City, Farmington is a community of just under 10,000 residents – a place known for its pastoral setting and a history that is as fixed as the stone used in the construction of so many of the pioneer homes built by the City's founding fathers.

Years before the Mormon pioneers came, the area was discovered and explored by Spanish Catholic priests and fur traders. The first white man to inhabit the area was Hector Caleb Haight who, with his wife Julia and two sons Horton and William, crossed the plains with the Mormon pioneers and erected a log cabin in 1847 at Haight's Bench where the family herded livestock in the surrounding foothills.

In 1848, the Hights were joined by the Burke, Davis, Grover, Miller, and William Smith families, and the City of North Cottonwood was born. The following year North Cottonwood expanded even further with the arrival of the Hess, Clark, J. Smith, Robinson, Secrist, and Richard families. What had been a sparsely populated collection of homesteads began to take shape as a recognizable community.

That same year the Mormon North Cottonwood Ward was organized and two years later settlers hauled timber from Weber Canyon to build the first schoolhouse. In 1855, an adobe schoolhouse was constructed just west of 4th North and Main.

By 1853 the population totaled 413 and the town became known as "Farmington", in part due to the richness of the soil and also because Wilford Woodruff (Mormon church president) came from a town in Connecticut that bore the same name.

The years passed, 100 mph winds blew and floods, drought, and grasshoppers periodically wreaked havoc with the City, but settlers refused to be dislodged and Farmington continued to grow.

Builders, masons, midwives, doctors, schoolteachers, farmers, lawyers, blacksmiths, millers, and dozens of other craftsmen and women combined to build an aesthetically beautiful City that would stand the test of time and weather the elements.

Stone was hauled out of nearby canyons and fields and log cabins were replaced by stone masonry homes. Buildings, bridges, dams, fences, and roads were constructed. Soon the streets were lined with stately Cottonwood, Poplar, and Sycamore trees which, combined with the pioneer homes cast in stone, have become Farmington's trademark to this very day.

The territorial legislature designated Farmington as the seat of government for newly formed Davis County, and the first courthouse in Utah was built in November 1854 at a cost of \$6,000. In 1855, the first co-op store was opened by John Wood. Other businesses opened shortly thereafter, including a molasses mill and a flour mill owned by Willard Richards that is still standing today at the mouth of Farmington Canyon.

Farmington was incorporated December 15, 1892, with James H. Wilcox serving as the first mayor. The population was 1,180. By 1900, that number had increased to 4,700 and in the ensuing 10 years the population almost doubled to 9,028.

Accommodating the increasing number of newcomers who want to make Farmington their home has been a challenge to City officials who have had to scramble to provide adequate facilities and services to meet an ever increasing demand. The explosive growth also has citizens seeking solutions for preserving a past that has made Farmington unique.